
Association for Applied Sport Psychology Celebrates 25 Years Serving a Growing Profession

Sport and Exercise Psychology Expands Beyond the Elite Athlete

Madison, WI—October 2010—A prima ballerina, a fitness-minded woman with diabetes, members of a military bomb detonation unit, and a world-record-setting rower: What do they have in common? Each has benefitted from the services of a sport and exercise psychology consultant.

“In growing numbers of cases, professionals are applying the principles of traditional sport and exercise psychology to nontraditional areas, including entertainment, business, and the military,” said Amanda J. Visek, Ph.D., assistant professor with the Department of Exercise Science at The George Washington University. Dr. Visek also is Division Head for Public Relations and Outreach with the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), which marks its 25th anniversary this year.

“We are all in performance mode at some time in our lives, whether you’re a professional athlete, a middle-aged marathon runner, a student making a class presentation, or a PTA member giving a talk to her peers,” said Jack J. Lesyk, Ph.D., director of the Ohio Center for Sport Psychology.

Increasingly, sport and exercise psychology consultants address issues that include, but are not limited to:

- Performance challenges, such as anxiety and concentration problems
- Relationships with coaches, team members, and other support systems
- Sustaining motivation
- Injuries
- Substance abuse and eating disorders
- Goal-setting
- Career transitions

Consider the sport and exercise consultants behind the examples above. Dr. Sharon Chirban consults with the Boston Ballet. Carrie Cheadle runs a mental skills training program and camp for active adults with diabetes. Dr. Nate Zinsser is the director of the Performance Enhancement Program at the U.S. Military Academy. And Dr. Lesyk coached rower Katie Spitz in techniques for coping with the psychological challenges she faced on her recent 70-day, 2,817-mile Atlantic crossing.

Today’s Goals Go Beyond Winning

American sport and exercise psychology traces its roots to the 1920s, when Coleman Griffith, an assistant professor of educational psychology at the University of Illinois, published two seminal books: *The Psychology of Coaching* and *The Psychology of Athletics*. In 1965, the first World Congress of Sport Psychology was held in Rome. The U.S. Olympic Committee developed a Sport Psychology Advisory Board in 1980 and later held its first Conference on Sport Psychology. The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) was founded in 1986.

In the early years, sport and exercise psychology focused on outcomes. By the 1980s, practitioners began to recognize that personal skill-building deserved equal attention. “Sport and exercise psychology consultants are dedicated to helping individuals make the most of sport, exercise, and physical activity to enhance their personal development and wellbeing,” said Dr. Lesyk, who leads workshops for professionals seeking to enter the field.

-continued-

Recent AASP-member research supports this assertion. “We found that NCAA collegiate athletes and coaches are highly receptive to the addition of mental skills training and performance consulting,” said Craig Wisberg, Ph.D., professor of sport psychology at the University of Tennessee. “The field is headed toward a level of acceptance that will be evidenced by the addition of sport and exercise psychology consultants to public and private organizations that seek to provide sport and exercise participants with the highest-quality experiences.”

Societal Trends Spur Growth

As sport and exercise psychology moves beyond the realm of the elite athlete, more practitioners are entering the field. According to Dr. Visek, membership in AASP has grown from 138 charter members to over 1,400 members in 2010, and current members represent 38 countries.

“We are seeing the growth of our profession and of the AASP,” said Dr. Visek. “Increasingly youth sports organizations are turning to the AASP and to AASP Certified Consultants to provide insight and applied services to enhance the experiences of younger sport participants, their parents, and their coaches.”

Visek alluded to another societal trend fueling the profession’s growth. “Positive sport experiences help keep our youth active, which is essential to addressing the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, such as overweight and obesity, type 2 Diabetes, and other cardiometabolic consequences of inactivity,” she said. “Sport and exercise psychology has greatly contributed to understanding not only how to achieve maximal performance through mental preparation, but also how to sustain motivation in sport and exercise. These are considerable contributions to public health.”

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of sport and exercise psychology. Founded in 1986, AASP is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport and exercise psychology. With more than 1,400 members in 38 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its website, www.appliedsportpsych.org.

###

Sport and Exercise Psychology Advice and Resources Offered on Association for Applied Sport Psychology Website -- appliedsportpsych.org

MADISON, Wisconsin, October 2010 -- Athletes of all ages and abilities, coaches, parents and sports enthusiasts have a valuable and free resource of information that will help them get the most from their sport and exercise. Helpful articles written for the public on topics such as staying motivated, increasing confidence, coaching your child, choosing a sport psychology consultant and more can be found at the Resource Center on www.appliedsportpsych.org, the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) website.

Written by certified experts who are AASP members, the articles are based on research and experience, offering practical advice on how to get the most of the sport and exercise experience. Coaches can learn how to teach and apply sport psychology skills, while athletes can learn mental training skills.

Using Sport Psychology in Life

The site provides “how to” articles written in easy to apply language on a wide array of topics. The site’s Resource Center is divided by audience: For Athletes, For Coaches, For Parents, and For Professionals, as well as the topic areas of Health & Fitness, Injury & Rehabilitation.

A sample of the variety of articles includes:

- **“Overcoming Performance Errors with Resilience”** offers advice on what athletes need to do to rise above mistakes made while competing and using the experience as a basis for improvement. (For Athlete Section)
- **“Starting and Continuing a Walking Program ‘Get Into the Blue’”** offers an easy-to-follow, step-by-step process towards a successful exercise program, realistic goal setting, and staying motivated. (Health & Fitness Section)
- **“Using the Mind to Heal the Body: Imagery for Injury Rehabilitation”** defines imagery and how it can be used in pain management and healing. (Injury & Rehabilitation Section)
- **“Calling All Coaches: Do You Have a Mental Skills Map?”** gives tips on developing and practicing mental skills to become a better coach. (For Coaches Section)
- **“Do’s and Don’ts for Parents of Young Athletes”** offers parents advice on supporting their child’s athletic endeavors in the most positive and beneficial way. (For Parents Section)

Finding the Right Consultant

For individuals seeking the professional services of a certified consultant, “Choosing a Sport Psychology Consultant” offers guidance as well as assistance in locating a consultant by geographic area.

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of sport and exercise psychology. Founded in 1986, AASP is an international, multidisciplinary, professional organization that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport and exercise psychology. With more than 1,400 members in 38 countries, AASP is a worldwide leader, sharing research and resources with the public via its website, www.appliedsportpsych.org.



Prominent Leaders in Sport Psychology Available for Media Interviews

The AASP has an extensive list of leading authorities in sport and exercise psychology. Credentials range from professors, authors and researchers, to certified consultants who have worked with individual athletes, teams, coaches, and business leaders at all competitive levels. The following is a sample of a few of the leaders who are available to the media for interviews.

Bonnie G. Berger, Ed.D.

Professor and AASP President

Dr. Bonnie G. Berger is a professor at the School of Human Movement, Sport, & Leisure Studies at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She has taught undergraduate and graduate sport and exercise psychology for more than 30 years. Dr. Berger received a bachelor's degree from Wittenberg University and both a master's and doctorate with a specialization in exercise and sport psychology and motor learning, from Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Berger is an active researcher, with two published books to her credit: *Free Weights for Women* and *Foundations of Exercise Psychology*. Dr. Berger has written extensively in journals and book chapters on topics related to sport and exercise psychology, including physical activity and the quality of life, mood alteration, stress management, social physique anxiety and exercise enjoyment.

Dr. Berger is a charter member, fellow, and an AASP Certified Consultant. She has served on editorial boards of numerous journals including *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, *Quest*, *The Sport Psychologist*, and the *International Journal of Sport Psychology* and also has been the exercise and health psychology section editor of the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*.

Jack J. Lesyk, Ph.D.

Clinical and Sport Psychologist and AASP President-Elect

Dr. Jack J. Lesyk, the Director of the Ohio Center for Sport Psychology, is also Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology at Cleveland State University. He has been in full-time private practice for over 25 years as a clinical and sport psychologist and has worked with competitive athletes ranging from scholastic level to world-class Olympic and professional sports including golf, wrestling, basketball, football, baseball, motor sports, marathon, weight lifting, equestrian and speed skating. Dr. Lesyk is a clinical advisor to the American Running Association and is on the editorial board of the *American Journal of Medicine and Sports*. He has also worked with athletes in gymnastics, figure skating, tennis, soccer, and ice hockey.

Since the publication of his book, *Developing Sport Psychology Within Your Clinical Practice: A Practical Guide for Mental Health Professions*, Dr. Lesyk has spent an increasing amount of his professional time conducting intensive training workshops for mental health professionals who are developing their skills and credentials in sport psychology. Dr. Lesyk is an AASP Certified Consultant.

Glyn C. Roberts, Ph.D.

Sports Psychologist, Olympic Sports Consultant and AASP Past President

Dr. Glyn Roberts serves as the Professional Chair of Psychology at the Norwegian University of Sport Science in Oslo, Norway, and is the AASP Past President. He was a professor of sport psychology in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Illinois for 25 years.

Dr. Roberts is an accomplished researcher with more than 200 publications, including 10 books and over 50 book chapters, and has presented his research worldwide. Roberts is the founding co-editor of *The Sport Psychologist* and currently serves as associated editor for several major sport psychology journals. He was a consulting sport psychologist for the United States Gymnastic Federation for 10 years and has consulted with numerous Olympic and sport organizations.

Sean McCann, Ph.D.

U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) Sport Psychologist and Past AASP President

Dr. Sean McCann has worked for the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) based in Colorado as a sport psychologist for 17 years. He has traveled with the last seven Olympic Teams as a sport psychologist during the Olympics Games. In his role with the USOC, he works directly with teams and coaches, conducting mental skills seminars and workshops about Olympic pressure, as well as individual sessions with athletes, and works with teams at training camps and competitions. In addition to his work for the Olympic Committee as senior sport psychologist, he works with professional athletes from a variety of sports, from golf to NASCAR. Dr. McCann also writes extensively about sport psychology for numerous publications. Dr. McCann is an AASP Certified Consultant.

In addition to his work in the world of sports, Dr. McCann has been an adjunct staff member for the Center for Creative Leadership since 1997, working with high performers in the world of business.

Sport Psychology Topics:

Performance Psychology with Athletes

- Mental preparation for major events
- Managing anxiety
- Concentration
- Mental imagery
- Motivation and goal setting
- Avoiding burnout
- Mental skills assessments and interventions

Elite Athletes

- Preparation for Olympics, Super Bowl, etc.
- Post-event letdown
- Lifestyle of elite athletes
- Athletes as employees

Team Issues

- Team dynamics
- Leadership
- Team building

Youth Sports

- Participation in youth sports
- Motivation in youth athletes
- Dealing with parents and coaches
- Guidelines for parents and coaches
- Character/moral development through sports
- Exercise and diet

Psychology of Coaching

Social Psychology

- Fan behavior
- Sportsmanship
- Team dynamics
- Gender and diversity issues in sport

Psychology of Injury and Rehab

- Concussion management
- Coping with injury

Disabilities in Sport and Exercise

- Use of sport and exercise
- Special Olympics/Para-Olympic Games
- Therapeutic use of sport

Addictive and Unhealthy Behaviors

- Doping in sport
- Substance abuse and addictive behaviors
- Compulsive exercising
- Habit control: smoking, overeating, obesity
- Eating disorders
- Aggression and violence in sport
- Anger management

Health and Fitness Topics:

Exercise and Health

- Applying sport psychology techniques achieve a personal fitness program
- Exercise and mental health
- Exercise and wellness

Psychology of Injury and Rehab

- Concussion management
- Coping with injury

Business and Non-Sport Topics:

Performance Enhancement with Non-athletes

- Police, military, fire fighters, surgeons, pilots, etc.
- Performing artists
- Business
- Mental prep for exams: SAT, bar, medical exams
- Mental prep for testifying in court, having surgery

- Stress management

Career Transitions

- Moving upward and downward
- Career interruptions
- Voluntary and involuntary retirements

What is Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology?

Applied sport and exercise psychology involves extending theory and research to educate coaches, athletes, parents, exercisers, fitness professionals and athletic trainers about the psychological aspects of their sport or activity. A primary goal of professionals in applied sport and exercise psychology is to facilitate optimal involvement, performance and enjoyment in sport and exercise.

The practice of applied sport and exercise psychology usually involves a combination of individual and group consulting or counseling depending on the style of the professional conducting the intervention and the needs of the client.

AASP Certified Consultants and specially trained licensed psychologists are typically the most competent practitioners in applied sport and exercise psychology. Although there are many specific concepts within applied sport and exercise psychology (e.g., goal setting, concentration, motivation, relaxation, imagery), the general goal is to teach mental skills necessary to perform consistently in training and competition, increase adherence to exercise programs and to help individuals realize their potential.

Who Can Benefit From Sport and Exercise Psychology?

- Do you or your athletes:
 - need to improve focus during competition?
 - wish to improve confidence during practice or games?
 - perform as well or better in competition than practice?
- Are you looking for a competitive edge?
- Do you seek a positive experience in your child's organized youth sports?
- Do you need help to begin or continue an exercise program?
- Have you lost confidence or motivation after an injury?
- Are you looking for a way to improve your sport or exercise experience?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, applied sport and exercise psychology may be for you!

During the last two decades, applied sport and exercise psychology has received significant and increasing attention from athletes, coaches, parents and the media. Consider, for example:

- The growing number of elite, amateur and professional athletes who acknowledge working with applied sport psychology professionals.
- The increased media attention on increasing physical activity in youth as a way to fight the national obesity epidemic.
- Coaches at the high school and university levels who seek applied sport and exercise psychology professionals to work with their athletes and teams on game preparation, team cohesion, communication skills and other areas that affect performance.
- The growing concern about the use of performance enhancement substances in sport and exercise settings.
- Major universities, where applied sport and exercise psychology professionals are being added to athletic department staffs to assist athletes with life skills development and to improve coping with the demands of being a student-athlete.
- The number of professional and Olympic athletes who discuss mental training as a regular part of their training routines.
- Exercise specialists, athletic trainers, youth sport directors, corporations and psychologists who are using knowledge and techniques developed by applied sport and exercise psychology professionals to assist with improving exercise adherence, rehabilitating injuries, educating coaches and parents, building self-esteem, teaching group dynamics and increasing effectiveness.

What is the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP)?

The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) promotes the *science* and *practice* of sport and exercise psychology and is the only professional association in North America that offers sport and exercise psychology certification. With about 1,400 members in 38 countries, it is the largest applied sport and exercise psychology organization in the world.

AASP is member-driven and interdisciplinary, drawing from the fields of exercise and sport science, as well as psychology. The organization advocates the application of psychological principles that have been supported by research. Special interest groups provide grass roots leadership and the elected members of the executive board conduct the business of AASP. The association provides opportunities to share information related to theory development, research, and the provision of psychological services for consumers.

Who are AASP members?

The membership of AASP includes professionals and students from the fields of sport science and psychology.

- Sport science consists of many subdivisions, including kinesiology, biomechanics, sport management, sport physiology, sport nutrition, athletic training and others.
- Psychology, as applied to sport and exercise includes counseling, developmental, clinical and social psychology.

What is the purpose of the AASP?

- To provide leadership for the development of theory, research and applied practice in sport and exercise psychology.
- To offer and deliver services to athletes, coaches, teams, parents and other groups involved in exercise, sport participation and rehabilitation.
- To establish and maintain professional standards through the development of certification procedures, ethical guidelines and the promotion of respect for and value of human diversity.
- To certify individuals who have met high standards of training and experience to provide professional services in applied sport and exercise psychology.

The Association is comprised of three interrelated focus areas:

- **Performance Psychology** focuses on research, theory and practice intended to improve performance in exercise and sport. This area is also concerned with the effects of sport psychology interventions on the well-being of participants in exercise and sport.
- **Health and Exercise Psychology** focuses on the application of psychological principles to the promotion and maintenance of health-enhancing behaviors over the lifespan, including play, leisure physical activity and structured exercise, and the psychological and emotional consequences of those behaviors. Researchers in this area also investigate the role of exercise in disease remediation, injury rehabilitation and stress reduction.
- **Social Psychology** focuses on individual and group processes in sport and exercise settings. This area applies social psychological principles in examining factors related to the sport participant, coach, team and spectator.

A Valuable Public Resource: www.appliedsportpsych.org

In addition to providing membership information on its website, AASP's Resource Center provides valuable information for the general public with articles that address common sport-related situations and issues that athletes, parents, coaches and sports/exercise enthusiasts encounter. "Choosing a Sport Psychology Consultant" offers guidance to individuals seeking the services of a certified sport psychology consultant and the "Find a Consultant" directory assists in locating a consultant in a specific geographic area.

History:

Founding president, John M. Silva, established AASP in 1986 to promote the *science* and *practice* of sport and exercise psychology, while providing an opportunity for individuals to share information related to theory development, research, and the provision of psychological services to consumers. Since its inception, AASP has committed significant time and effort to identify essential criteria to the practice of applied sport psychology. In 1989, AASP established and approved criteria for certification intended to demonstrate that individuals seeking certification must have obtained a minimal level of training and experience to provide professional services in applied sport psychology.

Media Contacts:

Jennifer Reece or Betty Weibel
Yopko Penhallurick
jr@yp-pr.com or bw@yp-pr.com

Office: 440.543.8615
Fax: 440.543.0875

